

REMARKS

Claims 42-51 are pending in the above-identified application and were rejected. With this Amendment, claim 42 was amended. Accordingly, claims 42-51 are at issue.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Obviousness Rejection of Claims

Claims 42-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0818474, EP 0818420 and *Inagaki et al.* in view of DE 4444032, *Elfine, Monick et al., Horton, and Ramirez et al.* Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 42 recites a cleansing method, comprising the steps of: (a) providing a cleansing processing agent which comprises: (1) a hydrolyzed polymer having an acrylonitrile unit; (2) a unit selected from the group consisting of styrene, conjugated diene, and a combination thereof; (3) hydrophilic groups introduced into said acrylonitrile unit by adding an acid or an alkali thereto; and (4) ion groups being introduced into said acrylonitrile unit and said unit selected from the group consisting of styrene, conjugated diene, and a combination thereof, said polymer comprising said acrylonitrile unit and 20 to 95 mol% of said unit selected from the group consisting of styrene, conjugated diene and a combination thereof, and said polymer present in pieces not larger than 3.5 mesh, and wherein said unit comprises a molecular weight greater than 10,000,000, (b) contacting said agent with a material to be cleaned, the material to be cleaned containing at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and amine compound, and (c) absorbing the at least one of a heavy metal, ammonia, and an amine compound from the material to be cleaned.

In our opinion, none of the cited reference disclose or suggest the claimed subject matter of a method of cleansing, wherein said unit comprises a molecular weight greater than 10,000,000.

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In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all claims are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully request early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:



David Rozenblat

Registration No. 47,044

SONNENSCHEIN NATH & ROSENTHAL LLP

P.O. Box 061080

Wacker Drive Station, Sears Tower

Chicago, Illinois 60606-1080

(312) 876-8000